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ABSTRACT

Test results for students from Massachusetts charter schools were analyzed. As 14 Massachusetts charter schools completed their second year of operation, and 7 more finished their first year, results from standardized tests taken by charter school students were becoming available. Test results are the only indicators of performance analyzed in this report, although they will not be the only indicators considered by the Massachusetts Department of Education in evaluating the performance of a charter school. Tests results show that, with two exceptions, students who entered the charter schools on average scored at, or below, district or national test averages. Other data also suggest that 80% of the charter schools that opened in 1995 (12 of 15) have enrolled students who are average or below average in academic performance. Early preliminary results for charter schools from other sources are promising, and charter schools are now using a combination of standardized tests, portfolio assessment, and other performance measures in order to demonstrate educational results. An appendix contains an assessment profile for each of 22 charter schools. (SLD)

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Test Results from Massachusetts Charter Schools

A Preliminary Study

June, 1997

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Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner

June, 1997

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to issue this preliminary study of test results from Massachusetts charter schools.

This report cannot offer a definitive statement on the academic progress of students in charter schools. These early results are more suggestive than authoritative, and more data will come over the months and years ahead. Yet, there are now sufficient data to suggest answers to questions about the academic performance level of students entering charter schools, and at least preliminary data about the academic gains those students have made.

The three key findings in this report are as follows:

- In general, the academic performance of students entering charter schools was at or below district or national averages.
- The early preliminary test results for charter schools are promising.
- Charter schools are using a combination of standardized tests, portfolio assessment, and other performance measures in order to demonstrate educational results.

I would like to acknowledge Scott Hamilton, Associate Commissioner for Charter Schools, Paul Herdman and the other Department of Education staff for their work in developing this report.

For more information, please contact them at:

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Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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Test Results from Massachusetts Charter Schools:

A Preliminary Study

REPORT FINDINGS

As fourteen Massachusetts charter schools complete their second year of operation, and seven more finish their first year, results from standardized tests taken by charter school students are becoming available. More data will come over the months and years ahead. But there are now sufficient data to suggest answers to questions about the academic performance level of students entering charter schools and at least preliminary data about the academic gains those students have made.

What follows is a brief analysis of available standardized test results from charter schools, followed by an appendix comprised of testing data on each school. The report is organized around three questions:

1) What is the academic performance level of students entering charter schools?
2. Are charter school students making academic gains?
3) How are charter schools measuring student performance?

While test results are the only indicators of performance analyzed in this report, they will not be the only indicators considered by the Department of Education in assessing a charter school's performance. Standardized tests do not tell us everything about a school. Through reporting and formal site visits, the state will also gather data in regard to: academic performance (both academic -- state tests,[1] performance-based measures and non-academic indicators -- such as drop-out rates and attendance); the organizational viability of the school, and the school's compliance with its charter and the attending state and federal laws and regulations.

These schools will need to be in operation a number of years before definitive statements about their success or failure can be made. Nevertheless, standardized test results offer comparable, credible measurement of the cognitive development of children. In the years to come, student performance will be measured based on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (state tests aligned with the new state standards or Curriculum Frameworks). However, during this period when the state is changing its statewide testing system, these standardized test results offer valuable information about the charter school initiative.

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[1] All public schools, including charter schools, must participate in the state's testing program. Third grade students will be tested in their reading skills via the IOWA test of Basic Skills. Fourth, eighth and tenth grades students will be tested via the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, or MCAS, a series of tests based on the state's new academic standards in the curriculum frameworks.

1. What is the academic performance level of students entering charter schools? Test results from the schools show that, with two exceptions, students who enrolled in charter schools on average, scored at or below district or national test averages (see Table 1 below, also see Appendix for more detailed information). This finding is consistent with the demographic data reported in *The Massachusetts Charter School Initiative, 1996 Report.*

Based on an analysis of available state, district and charter school data, it appears that 80% (12 out of 15) of charter schools that opened in 1995 have enrolled students that are average or below average in academic performance (Table 1 and Appendix). The students in ten of those schools appeared generally to be performing at or below their sending district averages (or national norms, when no district standardized test data was available). Two schools, YouthBuild Boston and Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter Schools, only enroll former drop-outs. Most of the seven charter schools that opened in 1996 have yet to report their standardized test scores.

Two schools, the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School in Orleans and the Francis W. Parker Charter School on former Fort Devens, despite open admissions processes, appear to have enrolled students that were, in general, performing above those of their respective sending districts (see Table 1 and attached Appendix)[2].

[2] A third school, Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, has not yet administered a standardized test, so it is not possible to show how these students compared to their district counterparts when they enrolled.

Table 1: ***Academic Performance Levels of Entering Charter School Students***

Charter School	*Compared to:*		*Entering Student Performance*		
	District[3]	*Nat'l Norms*[4]	*Avg. - Below Avg.*	*Avg. - Above Avg.*	*NC*
Atlantis	N/A	Below	√		
Benjamin Banneker	N/A	Below	√		
Benjamin Franklin	Same	Above	√		
Boston Renaissance.	Same	Average	√		
Cape Cod Lighthouse	Above	Above		√	
Chelmsford	--	--			√
City on a Hill	Same	Below	√		
Community Day	NC	Below	√		
Francis W. Parker	Above	Above		√	
Hilltown Cooperative	--	--			√
Lawrence Family	NC	Below	√		
Lowell Middlesex	NC	NA	√*		
Marblehead Community	Same	Above	√		
Martha's Vineyard	--	--			√
Neighborhood House	√	Average	√		
North Star Academy	--	--	√		
Pioneer Valley	--	--			√
SABIS Int'l	Same	Below	√		
Seven Hills	--	--			√
Somerville	Same/Bel.	Average	√		
South Shore	NA	Average	√		
YouthBuild Boston	NC	NC	√*		
TOTALS (1995 Schools Alone)			12	2	1
TOTALS (All Schools)			15	2	5

Notes:
NA = data not available.
NC = data not comparable.
* = Charter schools designed to serve former drop-outs.
-- = charter school testing data not yet available.
Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) scores for Boston Renaissance, Cape Cod Lighthouse, Francis W. Parker and SABIS International Charter Schools were reviewed, and generally corroborated with scores on national standardized assessments.

[3] This column indicates how the entering charter school students compared to their sending districts. "Same" denotes that the aggregate scores of the charter school were generally representative of the district from which the students came. "Above" indicates that the aggregate charter school scores were 5 or more points higher than the school's sending districts in all grades and in more than half of the subject areas reported.

[4] This column indicates how the entering charter school students in this school compared to national norms. "Average" denoted that aggregate charter school scores suggested that students were performing on grade level and/ or at approximately the 50th percentile nationally.

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2. Are students in charter schools making academic gains? Six out of the eight schools, from which adequate test data is available, appear to be making academic gains. These schools (Benjamin Franklin, Boston Renaissance, City on a Hill, Community Day, Lowell Middlesex Academy and SABIS International Charter Schools)[5] opened in 1995 and have administered at least two rounds of testing (see Table 2 and Appendix).

As the oldest charter schools in the Commonwealth are only now approaching the completion of their second year of operation, these apparent gains should be viewed with care. Sample sizes in schools and grade levels are often small, so small changes in the composition of a given student pool could result in substantial shifts in school scores. Much more data will need to be gathered before any clear determinations can be made about the success or failure of any given school or the charter school initiative as a whole.

Perhaps the most considerable gains can be found at the SABIS International Charter School in Springfield. This school was one of the lowest performing in the district. Superintendent Negroni and members of the Springfield community invited SABIS International, Inc., a private educational management company, to take over the management of the school. Through this transition, the faculty and administration was completely changed while the 400 students who were attending the school remained. In the fall of the first year of this newly converted school, students tested (on average) below grade level in every subject in grades 2 - 6. Seven months later, these same students had on average increased 1.5 grade equivalent levels and the students in grades 2, 4, 6 and 7 were performing at or above grade level in every subject area and those in grades 3 and 5, while also making gains, were only slightly below grade level.

The academic gains are unclear in two of the eight schools. While students in both the Neighborhood House Charter School and Marblehead Community Charter Public School, began in 1995, administered two rounds of testing, and appear to be performing at or above grade level, the limitations of the available data do not allow for any clear conclusions in regard to academic gains. In the case of Neighborhood House, there are not enough comparable data from one year to the next on the same test and the same grade levels. In the case of Marblehead Community Charter Public School, there are insufficient data to draw any conclusions because the school used different versions of the same test from year to year. In 1995, MCCPS used the Stanford-8 and in 1996, it used the Stanford-9. The test publisher warns that, "schools selecting a new achievement test should avoid comparing scores from [Stanford-8 to Stanford-9] to draw conclusions about changes in performance...apparent drops (or increases) ... are not necessarily real decreases (or increases). Thus, in both cases, more data will need to be gathered using the same test in the years to come in order to validly evaluate the success of their respective academic programs.

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[5] See Note below Table 2.

Table 2: *Are Charter School Students Making Academic Gains?*

Charter schools that have administered two or more standardized tests	*Tests (Administered)*	*Grades*	*Academic Gains?*
Benjamin Franklin	CAT-5 (W-95 & S-96)	K-5	***Yes.*** • 2nd through 4th graders, on average, increased more than a full grade equivalent level in the 5 months between pre- and post testing. • National percentile rankings in grades 2 and 3 increased (grade 4 rankings dropped slightly, but maintained high levels, 75-89).
Boston Renaissance	MAT-7 (F-95); Stanford-9 (S-96)	3-8	***Yes.*** * • 3rd and 5th graders, who on average, were below grade level at the fall of 1995, were at or above grade level in the spring of 1996.
City on a Hill	MAT-7 (F-95); Stanford-9 (S-96)	9	***Yes.*** * • 9th graders who would have scored in the middle third of Boston Public High Schools and below average nationally in the fall, would have scored in the top third of BPS high schools in the spring.
Community Day	MAT-7 (F-95 & S-96)	1-4	***Yes.*** • 3rd and 4th grade students showed substantial gains in national percentile rankings -- increasing up to 22% from fall to spring. • Students in grades 2, 3 and 4 increased an average of 1.5 grade equivalent levels in 8 months.
Lowell Middlesex Academy	CBCPT (F-95 & S-96)	9-12	***Yes.*** • Former drop-outs showed gains of 12.5 percentage points from fall to spring on CBCPT.
Marblehead Community	Stanford-8 (F-95); Stanford-9 (F-96)	5-8	***Inconclusive.*** • 5th through 7th grade students maintained high levels of performance in reading, language, math, but the gains from 1995 to 1996 are unclear.
Neighborhood House	MAT-7 (F-95); Stanford-9 (S-96)	1-5	***Inconclusive.*** * • 3rd and 5th grade scores in 1996 would place NHCS in the middle to upper third of Boston Public Schools, but since NHCS did not have these grades in 1995, there is not enough data to determine whether gains were made.
SABIS International	IOWA (S-95 & F-96)	2-8	***Yes.*** • In the fall, these students, were below grade level in grades 2-6 (on average). Seven months later: - students in grades 2 - 7 had gained 1.5 grade equivalents, - grades 2, 4, 6 and 7 were at or above grade level, and, - grades 3 and 5, while also showing substantial gains, were only slightly below grade level.

Notes:

* - Scores from these three Boston schools are from two different tests - the MAT-7 in the fall and the Stamford-9 in the spring. Because of this difference, these scores are not directly comparable. However, academic gains were assumed when: (a) students entered performing below grade level and performed at or above grade level in the spring; or (b) when comparisons relative to the district suggested academic gains.

Abbreviations:

CAT-5 = California Achievement Test of Basic Skills, Series 5
CBCPT = College Board Computerized Placement Test
IOWA = Iowa Test of Basic Skills
MAT-7 = Metropolitan Achievement Test, Series 7
Stanford-9 = Stanford Achievement Test, Series 9

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3. How are charter schools measuring student performance? Virtually all charter schools appear to be taking seriously their responsibility of being accountable for results. In addition to working to align their curricula with the state standards and participating in the state's testing program, charter schools have developed thoughtful school-level student assessment programs (see Table 3 for overview, also see the Appendix for more detailed descriptions).

Twenty of the twenty-two schools that have opened since 1995 have administered standardized assessments (Hilltown Cooperative, which opened in 1995, and Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Schools, which opened in 1996, have not yet administered any standardized tests, but will be administering tests in the fall of 1997.).

Eighteen of these schools are utilizing some form of portfolio assessment (Table 3). Portfolios take many forms, playing a larger role in the assessment of some charter school students than others. Much like educators around the country, most charter schools are wrestling with how much information to gather, what the criteria should be in reviewing student work and how best to reliably score and report this data. Many of the charter schools are keenly interested in performance-based assessment and may develop models that could benefit other schools. Perhaps the most promising portfolio assessment model can be found at the Francis W. Parker Charter School which is part of the Coalition of Essential Schools. The school is still developing reliable methods for scoring and reporting data, but it has developed clear criteria for evaluating student work and has created a school culture that is self-reflective and has high standards.

Seven of the charter schools are working to refine competency-based promotion systems (Table 3). These schools reject connecting promotion with "seat-time." They believe that students must demonstrate that they can perform or understand the school's pre-defined skills or content required for promotion. For example, City on a Hill Charter School in Boston has established 11 competencies that they expect all students to know and be able to do before they graduate (such as being able to write a well-organized and interesting essay and give a 10 minute speech). Students are given opportunities to demonstrate their competency through an array of standardized and teacher-developed assessments as well as an end-of-the-year "juried assessment." Last spring, 72 members of the community were invited into the school to grade each of the students' ability to read, speak, write and compute. The results from this juried assessment were that only 30% of the ninth grade students met the competencies in the subject areas tested. Further, the board and faculty are committed to providing extra services in the summer or retaining unprepared students for an extra year or two so that when they receive a City on a Hill diploma they will have earned it.

Table 3: *Student Assessments in Massachusetts Charter Schools*

Charter Schools	*Standardized Tests*					*State Tests*	*Portfolio Assessment**	*Competency-Based Promotion*
	CAT-5	*MAT-7*	*IOWA*	*Stan-ford*	*Other*			
Atlantis		√				√	√	
Benjamin Banneker	√					√	√	
Benjamin Franklin	√					√	√	
Boston Renaissance		√		√		√	√	
Cape Cod Lighthouse	√					√	√	
Chelmsford Public		√				√	√	
City On A Hill		√		√		√	√	√
Community Day		√				√	√	√
Francis W. Parker				√		√	√	√
Hilltown Cooperative					√[6]	√	√	
Lawrence Family				√	√[7]	√	√	
Lowell Middlesex					√[8]	√	√	√
Marblehead Community				√		√	√	
Martha's Vineyard					√[9]	√	√	
Neighborhood House		√		√		√	√	
North Star Academy			√			√	√	√
Pioneer Valley				√[10]		√	√	
SABIS International			√			√		
Seven Hills		√				√	√	
Somerville					√[11]	√		
South Shore	√					√	√	√
YouthBuild					√[12]	√	√	√

Notes:
* As mentioned in the text, portfolio assessment takes many different forms and may vary dramatically from school to school.

[6] Hilltown Cooperative Charter School will administer the IOWA or Stanford-9 beginning next fall (Board of Trustees will decide by July 1, 1997).
[7] Lawrence Family Development Charter School administered the Brigance Test of Diagnostic Skills last year.
[8] Lowell Middlesex Academy administers the College Board Computerized Placement Test.
[9] Martha's Vineyard Charter School administers the Terra Nova, an exam from McGraw-Hill Publishers.
[10] Pioneer Valley will administer the Stanford-9 in the fall of 1997.
[11] Somerville Charter School administers the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS).
[12] Youth Build Boston Charter School administered the Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS).

The reader should be reminded that this report does not purport to be a definitive statement on the academic progress of students in charter schools. These early results are more suggestive than authoritative. A more comprehensive study will follow after spring testing results have been compiled. Yet it can be concluded from the data thus far that on average the academic performance of students entering charter schools was at or below district or national averages; the early test results for charter schools look promising; and charter schools are taking seriously the responsibility of proving themselves worthy of public tax dollars by developing a range of thoughtful school-level accountability measures.

More data and a subsequent report will be available this fall. The state has administered third and tenth grade standardized tests this spring, and the schools have completed the administration of their own spring standardized tests. Once this data has been gathered a more complete report will be released.

Test Results from Massachusetts Charter Schools:
A Preliminary Study

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

About this study:

The following pages include a summary of the school-level student assessment programs and available test results for each school. The intent of this preliminary study was to gather data to answer the following three questions:

1) What is the academic performance level of students entering charter schools?

2) How are charter schools measuring student performance?; and

3) Are students in charter schools making academic gains?

The assertions found in this preliminary study are based on analysis of the available state, district and charter school data. State data, the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), was limited -- only four charter schools recorded data (see Table 3). The primary reasons for the lack of charter school MEAP data are: (1) Seven of the twenty-two schools weren't open when the test was administered; (2) the MEAP was given at grades and 4, 8, and 10 and some charter schools simply did not have students in those grades; and (3) the MEAP was a "matrix sampling" test (meaning all of the students in a school were given a part of the test) designed to measure the effectiveness of schools; however, many of the charter schools were too small to provide valid results. As noted in Table 2, the MEAP scores for these four charter schools corroborated the student scores on the nationally standardized assessments. In the future, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, MCAS, will provide individual student results.

District and charter school standardized test data are often difficult to compare. Aside from the potential differences between charter schools and districts in terms of sample size and demographic make-up, often times there were problems with the availability of the data or how it was reported. Charter schools were encouraged by the state to administer a standardized test that mirrored their primary sending district. When charter schools and districts closely mirrored each other in type and scheduling of testing, comparisons were relatively straightforward. However, when district test data were not available, assertions were made based on the performance of a charter school's students in relation to the norm reference group used by the standardized test publisher.

The data available from districts varied dramatically. District testing schedules often appeared to be informed by Title I regulations. In order to receive federal funding, these regulations required districts to show adequate yearly progress for eligible students. As a result, most districts with Title I eligible students administered a standardized test in at least math and reading/language arts. In 1995, Title I requirements changed and standardized testing was no longer required. Many districts continued their testing programs nevertheless, but some districts stopped their standardized testing programs altogether. In sum, since there is no uniform state or federal requirements on

standardized test reporting, the data available from district to district varies dramatically in quantity and level of analysis.

The test scores used in this preliminary study were chosen based on their ease of comprehension and availability. National Percentile Ranks[13] and Grade Equivalent Levels[14] were used over Stanines[15] or Normal Curve Equivalents[16] because the former two were the most available from districts and are perceived to be more readily understood by the general public.

In the future, the state will ask charter schools to report data in terms of performance levels rather than relative to national norms. This is consistent with trends at the federal level, i.e. the National Assessment of Educational Progress and Title I requirements, and the state, i.e. MCAS -- which both report data in relation to performance levels. Reporting in this fashion, will also provide the state and the general public with a clearer and more consistent picture of student performance in charter schools.

The state also intends to review data in a consistent fashion. When possible, the state will attempt to review standardized test data "longitudinally" -- following the performance of the same group of students over time. MCAS data will be reviewed "cross-sectionally" -- meaning test scores for 4th graders in 1998 will be compared to the scores of 4th graders in 1997.

In all analyses, the academic performance of charter schools will be assessed based on the achievement of students enrolled in a given charter school over time. Charter school to district comparisons in this preliminary study were only done to determine the performance level of entering charter school students[17]. Moving forward, academic gains will be measured against where these students began at the charter school, not in relation to the district in which the charter school resides. As mentioned above, a subsequent report, based on more data, will be available this fall.

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[13] National Percentile Rank - indicates the percentage of students who had lower scores than a particular student based on a national sampling of students.

[14] Grade Equivalent Levels - represents the average performance of students tested in a given month of the year, e.g. 3.1 is what an average student should score in September (the first month) of third grade.

[15] Stanine - coarse groupings, from 1 - 9, of percentile ranks, e.g., the 5th stanine roughly equates to percentile ranks of 40 - 59.

[16] Normal Curve Equivalent - like pecentile ranks, these scores range from 1 - 99. They differ from percentile ranks in that they divide the normal bell curve into 99 equal parts, while percentile ranks are concentrated at the 50th percentile.

[17] Charter school to district comparisons were made in determining the academic gains of the Boston schools because these schools switched their testing to mirror the Boston Public Schools testing schedule.

Student Assessment Profile
Atlantis Charter School

School Description: The Atlantis Charter School is located in Fall River and serves 335 students in grades K through 6. Atlantis provides a well-rounded elementary curriculum and uses its proximity to the sea as a base for thematic instruction. This school was founded by public and private parties in Fall River committed to education reform.

Years in operation: 2

School-Level Accountability
The Atlantis Charter School uses a range of student performance measures. Teacher observations and individual feedback to students and parents is very important. In addition, each spring, Atlantis students will participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in the third and fourth grades and administers the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 to its students in grades 3 through 5. Portfolio assessment is also used in monitoring student performance.

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?:
Below Average / Average

- In grades 3 and 4, more than 90% of the students were performing in stanines 1-6 (the middle and lower stanines).
- In grade 5, between 70-84% of the students scored in stanines 1-6, with the majority (approximately 60%) performing in the middle third.
- Fall River Public School District does not administer any standardized assessments other than those required by the state, thus it is impossible to make any comparisons between the Atlantis Charter School and the Fall River Public Schools.

In sum, these scores suggest that the students who entered the Atlantis Charter School performed at a level which was at or below national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. MAT-7 scores for the spring of 1997 are not yet available.

Atlantis Charter School MAT-7 Test Scores (Spring 1996)

Grade	Subject	Atlantis Charter School (Students in Stanines)		
		(1-3)	(4-6)	(7-9)
3	Reading	3	10	1
	Language	8	7	2
	Math	10	6	1
4	Reading	6	9	1
	Language	6	9	1
	Math	8	8	0
5	Reading	2	15	7
	Language	3	15	6
	Math	7	13	4

Note:
Fall River Public School District currently does not administer any standardized tests in addition to MCAS.

Student Assessment Profile
Benjamin Banneker Charter School

School Description: The Benjamin Banneker Charter School is located in Cambridge and serves 196 students in grades K through 5. The mission of the Banneker School is to help underserved populations in Cambridge overcome traditional barriers to academic success. This school was founded by a local group of primarily African-American educators, community leaders and parents.

Years in operation: 1

School-Level Accountability
The Benjamin Banneker Charter School measures its students performance with standardized tests and performance-based assessments. Each spring, Benjamin Banneker students will participate in MCAS in the third and fourth grades and each fall and spring the school administers the California Achievement Test-5 to grades 2 through 5. Student work is also reviewed through regular progress reports and collected in student portfolios. In addition, every six weeks students exhibit what they have learned to an audience of teachers, parents, and classmates.

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Below Average.

- On average, students performed below their grade equivalent level in all reported subject areas and grades;
- national percentile rankings in all reported grades were well below 50% (between 20 - 37%).
- Test scores from the Cambridge Public Schools were not available.

In sum, based on these scores it appears that the students who entered the Benjamin Banneker Charter School were performing at a level which was below national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. This school, in its first year of operation, has only administered the CAT-5 in the fall of 1996. Spring scores are not yet available.

Benjamin Banneker CAT-5 Test Scores (Fall 1996)

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Rankings	Grade Equivalent Levels
2	Reading	24.3	1.6
	Language	21.8	1.6
	Math	15.0	1.6
3	Reading	n/a	
	Language		
	Math		
4	Reading	37.0	3.6
	Language	31.0	3.0
	Math	23.0	3.3
5	Reading	31.3	4.1
	Language	20.0	2.7
	Math	27.5	4.1

Note: Cambridge Public Schools test scores were not available.

Student Assessment Profile
Benjamin Franklin Charter School

School Description: The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School is located in Franklin and serves 197 students in grades K through 5. The school uses E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence in combination with character education as the framework for its curriculum. This school was founded by a group of Franklin parents.

Years in operation: 2

School-Level Accountability
The Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School monitors student performance based on a clear set of standards. Working in collaboration with the Modern Red Schoolhouse, a New American Schools Design Team, the Benjamin Franklin has aligned its curriculum to a defined set of standards. Students will participate in MCAS, are tested each spring via the CAT-5, as well as complete performance tasks and assessments specific to the Modern Red Schoolhouse standards.

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average.

- Both the Benjamin Franklin Charter School students and those in the Franklin Public Schools scored between the 75th - 90th percentiles nationally;
- grade mean equivalents suggest that both the charter school and the district are populated with students that are performing (on average) well above grade level.

In sum, the performance of the Benjamin Franklin Charter School students is above average compared to national norms but appears to be about the same as those of the Franklin Public Schools.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Yes.

- On average, Benjamin Franklin Charter School students showed moderate to substantial gains during the brief five month span between the school's pre- and post-testing (December, 1995 - May, 1996).
- In grade 2, students increased over 2 grade mean equivalent levels and improved their national percentile rankings by 9-18 points.
- In grade 3, students improved by more than one grade mean equivalent level and between 2-5 national percentiles.
- In grade 4, while scoring very high on pre- and post tests, students showed the least gain. Grade mean equivalents increased by more than one in all subject areas, but national percentile rankings dipped by 1-3 percentiles in three out of four subject areas.

Benjamin Franklin CAT-5 Test Scores (Spring 1996)

Grade	Subject	Grade Equivalent Levels*				National Percentile Rankings		
		B. Franklin		Franklin		B. Franklin		Franklin
2		12/95	5/96	3/96		12/95	5/96	3/96
	Reading	3.1	5.6			72	87	
	Language	2.9	5.2			67	76	
	Math	2.7	5.0			70	88	
3	Reading	5.5	6.5	5.8		87	89	83
	Language	5.9	8.6	7.5		81	86	82
	Math	4.2	5.2	5.2		75	78	84
4	Reading	6.9	8.7			88	89	
	Language	9.2	10.2			87	86	
	Math	5.3	5.8			79	75	
5	Reading			7.9				74
	Language			10.8				82
	Math			7.6				77

Note:

* The dates when the tests were administered should be considered when comparing GMEs.

Student Assessment Profile
Boston Renaissance Charter School

School Description: The Boston Renaissance Charter School, located in Boston, is one of the largest charter schools in the nation and serving 1,045 students in grades K through 8. The mission of Renaissance is to prepare a diverse cross-section of the city's children for success with a high quality education at prevailing public school costs. The school was founded by a partnership between a local foundation and community members and it is managed by The Edison Project, a private educational management company.

Years in operation: 2

School-Level Accountability
Boston Renaissance Charter School (BRCS) utilizes a wide range of assessment tools to measure student performance. Students participate in the state assessment system and mirror the Boston Public Schools by taking the Stanford-9 Test of Academic Achievement. In addition, based on Edison Project standards, BRCS administers an open-ended assessment developed in partnership with the Educational Testing Service. The Renaissance faculty have also worked with the faculty of the twelve Edison schools nationwide to develop a credible portfolio and performance-based assessment system (e.g. Edison project faculty from around the nation meet regularly to compare their assessments of student work in an effort to ensure scoring reliability).

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average.

- Students entering the Boston Renaissance Charter School scored below average compared to national norms;
- on average, students in all grades and subject areas tested were below the 50th percentile nationally (with the exception of 5th grade reading) and;
- all were below their respective grade equivalent levels.
- Since BRCS did not administer the complete battery of tests to their grades 3 and 5 students, as BPS did, it is not possible to determine how these students performed relative to the district.

In sum, the performance of the BRCS students entering grades 3 - 5 was below average compared to national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Yes.

- The school's change in tests from the MAT-7 to the Stanford-9 prevents direct pre- and post-comparisons;
- but, on average, students in grades 3 and 5 were performing below grade level in the fall, and were at, or above, grade level by the spring (albeit a different norm).

In sum, although more data with the same test will need to be collected, students appear to be making academic gains.

Boston Renaissance Charter School MAT-7 and Stanford-9 Test Scores

Grade	Subject	Fall 1995 MAT-7		Spring 1996 Stanford-9		
		Boston Renaissance		Boston Renaissance		BPS
		Grade Equivalent Levels (GEL)	National Percentile	GEL	% proficient	% proficient
3	Reading	2.7	40	3.9	41	42
	Language	2.1	36	3.9	n/r	n/r
	Math	2.0	27	4.0	41	33
4	Reading	3.2	35			
	Language	2.0	28			
	Math	2.3	16			
5	Reading	4.8	53	6.9	43	30
	Language	4.5	43	6.7	42	n/r
	Math	4.2	36	5.7	26	26

Note:

Boston Renaissance Charter School's MEAP scores for spring 1996, on average, were above those of the Boston Public Schools and slightly below the state average. Since this was the last administration of this test, these results will not be helpful in determining baseline data.

Student Assessment Profile
Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

School Description: The Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School is located in Orleans and serves 162 students in grades 6 through 8. The school is inspired by Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. CCLCS provides a student-centered program with challenging learning experiences that bridge traditional academic disciplines. This group was founded by a grassroots coalition of parents and community organizers.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability
Student achievement is measured primarily through the use of performance-based assessments. Each spring, students will participate in MCAS at the 8th grade level and students in grades 6 and 7 are tested via the California Achievement Test-5. In addition, portfolios, student self-assessment student demonstrations of knowledge are integral features of the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School assessment system.

Cape Cod Lighthouse CAT-5 Test Scores (Spring, 1996)

Grade	Subject	% at or above the 50th percentile nationally	
		Cape Cod	Nauset
7	Reading	97.5	59.9
	Language	94.7	60.0
	Math	84.6	54.7

Notes:
- 122 (75%) out of 163 come from Nauset Regional School District.
- MEAP scores for Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School and the Nauset Regional School District exceeded the state average, with Cape Cod's scores being higher than Nauset's. Since this was the last administration of this test, these scores will not be helpful in establishing baseline data.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Above Average.

- Seventh grade scores are above average in relation to national norms.
- These scores are, on average, substantially higher than the Nauset Regional School District;
- January 30, 1996 CAT-5 scores for the 40 fifth grade students that left the Nauset Regional School District to go to the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School last year, indicate that approximately 70% (29 students) ranked at the 76th percentile or higher (compared to 38% in the district), with close to 50% (19) ranking at the 95th percentile or higher.

In sum, it appears that the students that entered the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School on average, performed higher than the students in the districts from which they came.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. The Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School has administered the CAT-5 in the springs of 1996 and 1997. This year's data is not yet available.

Student Assessment Profile
Chelmsford Public Charter School

School Description: The Chelmsford Public Charter School is located in Chelmsford and serves 154 students in grades 5 through 8. This school uses an approach called System Dynamics which gives students a mental framework for processing knowledge, synthesizing learning, and making connections to broader principles. The school was started by local parents.

Years in operation: 1

School-level Accountability
Chelmsford Charter School measures the academic performance of its students through a range of assessments. In the spring, Chelmsford Charter School students will participate in MCAS at the 8th grade level and the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 at the 5th-8th grade levels. In addition, Chelmsford Charter School faculty have developed a portfolio assessment system that requires students to present and defend their work regularly.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Insufficient Data. The first administration of the MAT-7 will be the spring of 1997. These results are not yet available.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data.

Student Assessment Profile
City on a Hill Charter School

School Description: City on a Hill Charter School is located in downtown Boston and serves 104 students in grades 9 through 11. This school's curriculum is built on high academic standards and civic expectations. COH was started by two former Chelsea public school teachers.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability

City on a Hill Charter School (COH), uses a range of student assessments. The most innovative, its juried assessment, is based on the tradition of oral exams. COH, like all charter schools, participates in the state assessment system and in addition, it has chosen to administer the Stanford-9, to mirror the Boston Public Schools. Tenth grade students also take the PSATs while 11th graders will take the SATs.

The most unique aspect of the City on a Hill assessment system is the school's juried assessment system. The faculty have decided upon 11 competencies that all students should be able to meet before receiving a high school diploma. Last year, 72 members of the community -- professionals from a range of fields -- participated and scored student work based on task-specific criteria, or rubrics. Every student made written and oral presentations in reading, speech, math, science, writing and Spanish -- they all had to explain complex math problems, read and discuss literature, and make persuasive arguments.

City on a Hill Charter School Test Scores

Grade	Subject	Fall 1995 MAT-7		Spring 1996 Stanford-9		
		National Percentile Rankings		Percentage at or above proficiency		
		COH MAT-6 Convers.*	BPS MAT-6 Spring 1995	COH Juried Assess.	COH	BPS
9	Reading	44	54	34.8	40.0	31
	Language	53	n/r	n/r	58.3	n/r
	Math	36	50	30.3	39.1	11

Note:
* These MAT-6 scores were converted from MAT-7 scores that were taken in the fall of 1995. These conversions are not precise since the scores are based on different norm groups.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average to Below Average.

- Percentile ranks of entering students were average to below average relative to national norms;
- Roughly 80% of the entering students were performing below grade level in math and reading nationally;
- MAT-6 conversion scores suggest that the entering COH students, while performing below the district average in both math and reading, would most likely have been in the middle third of BPS high schools.

In sum, the 1995 MAT-7 data indicates that ninth grade students that enrolled in COH appear to have been of average to below average performance compared to national and district norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Yes.

For purposes of comparison, if this school were part of the Boston Public School system its performance on the MAT-7 scores in the fall would have placed it in the middle third of schools, while its Stanford-9 scores in the spring would have placed it in the upper third of schools.

Student Assessment Profile
Community Day Charter School

School Description: The Community Day Charter School is located in Lawrence and serves 134 students in grades K through 5. The mission of the school is to serve as an anchor in the community to help the students in this predominately Hispanic community to excel academically. This school was founded by a city-wide coalition convened by the Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc..

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability

Community Day Charter School, (CDCS) has developed academic standards and a comprehensive means of measuring student performance. In partnership with Modern Red Schoolhouse, a New American Schools design team, CDCS went through a three-step process of developing academic standards. The faculty began by establishing their own academic standards, they then compared those to the nationally recognized Modern Red Schoolhouse standards, and finally, they adapted the standards to be in compliance with those of the state.

Based on these standards, CDCS has developed an assessment system that utilizes multiple measures. Like all charter schools, CDCS participates in MCAS. In addition, it administers the Metropolitan Achievement Test-7 and a customized test developed and scored by the Modern Red Schoolhouse. Students can demonstrate their mastery of the standards through "capstone projects," or clearly defined, long-term projects, at the 4th and 8th grade-levels. CDCS faculty also provide feedback to students and their parents through teacher-generated tests and a developing portfolio system, again, tied to the CDCS standards.

See Test Results on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average to Below Average.

- On average, the CDCS students arrived at the school at grade level (Grade 2) or significantly below grade level (Grades 3 and 4);
- students were substantially below the 50th percentile nationally.
- Third grade students that entered Community Day in the fall of 1995 appear to have performed below the district average (a stanine of "5" generally correlates to percentile ranks of 45-55).

In sum, the students that entered the Community Day Charter School appear to have performed at an average to below average level.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Yes.

- Students in grades 3 and 4 uniformly increased their performance in math and reading in relation to national norms;
- students in grade 1 scored below their grade equivalent level in May, but there is no baseline data to compare these scores to;
- students in grades 2-4 increased, between 1.1 - 1.7 grade equivalent levels in eight months.

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Community Day Charter School MAT-7 Scores

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Ranking			Grade Equivalent Levels			*Lawrence Public Schools MAT-7 Stanines*
1		Oct. '95	May '96	Diff.	Oct. '95	May '96	Diff.	Fall '95
	Reading	n/a	22	n/a	n/a	1.3	n/a	
	Math	n/a	23	n/a	n/a	1.2	n/a	
2	Reading	n/a	71	n/a	2.4	3.5	1.1	
	Math	n/a	69	n/a	2.3	3.4	1.1	
3	Reading	5	37	22	1.5	2.8	1.3	5
	Math	29	38	9	2.2	3.7	1.5	5
4	Reading	41	59	18	3.4	4.7	1.3	
	Math	35	44	9	3.4	5.1	1.7	

Student Assessment Profile
Francis W. Parker Charter School

School Description: The Francis W. Parker Charter School is located on Devens (formerly Fort Devens) and serves 188 students in grades 7 through 9. The educational philosophy of the school is guided by Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools model. Parker provides a student-centered program with challenging learning experiences that bridge traditional academic disciplines. This school was founded by local parents.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability
Francis W. Parker Charter School (FWP), emphasizes a portfolio assessment approach. Just as all charter schools do, FWP participates in MCAS. In addition, FWP administers the Stanford-9 each spring.

Francis W. Parker Charter School has dedicated its energies toward developing a thoughtful portfolio assessment system. Detailed rubrics in mathematics, language arts and the sciences have been developed and are posted in every room. The Parker staff see assessment as being embedded in the curriculum. The performance criteria described in the rubrics, or school performance standards, drive what is taught in the school's various projects. FWP participates in the states portfolio assessment project, and is working toward developing a model portfolio assessment system.

See Test Results on next page.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average to Above Average.

- Parker draws from 24 school districts -- comparisons of scores from the school's 4 largest sending districts yielded the following:
  - Stanford-9 scores for Littleton and North Middlesex school districts are generally 5 percentage points or more lower than those of the Parker students (28%, or 52/188, of the Parker students come from these 2 districts combined);
  - Harvard and Groton Dunstable school districts (responsible for 32%, or 60/188, of the Parker enrollment) do not administer a comparable test.
- The remaining 40% of the Parker students are drawn from 20 different districts.
- Parker performance in mathematics appears to be "average" (51% at or above proficiency) compared to national norms.

In sum, it appears as though students that entered the Francis W. Parker Charter School in the fall of 1995 may have been higher performing than those of the school's various sending districts, but this assertion should be viewed cautiously since it is based on scores from less than a third of the student body, and since Parker's math scores are not above average compared to national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. The Francis W. Parker Charter School administered the Stanford-9 in the spring of 1996 and 1997. This year's results are not yet available.

Francis W. Parker Stanford-9 Scores (Spring 1996)

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Ranking			Performance Standard (% of students at or above proficiency)
		Parker	LN	NM	Parker
6	Reading			63.3	
	Language			53.8	
	Math			58.2	
7	Reading	87	81		86
	Language	83	75		75
	Math	81	73		51
8	Reading	85			83
	Language	75			63
	Math	68			38

Notes:

(**LN**) Littleton - 21 students attended the Francis Parker Charter School in 1996/97.

(**NM**) North Middlesex - 31 students attended the Francis Parker Charter School in 1996/97.

- MEAP scores for Littleton, Groton Dunstable, North Middlesex, Harvard School Districts and the Francis W. Parker Charter, all exceeded the state average. Parker's scores were about the same as those of Harvard (within 5 points) and exceeded the scores of the other three districts. Since that was the last administration of the MEAP, these data will not be helpful in establishing baseline data.

Student Assessment Profile
Hilltown Cooperative Charter School

School Description: The Hilltown Cooperative Charter School is located in Haydenville and serves 54 students in grades K through 5. This school draws upon the "Reggio Emilia" model, an Italian early childhood approach, which is child-centered and is guided by the children's queries and interests.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability
Hilltown Cooperative Charter School (HCCS) has developed a detailed set of competencies in the core subject areas and relies on teacher evaluations to determine whether these competencies have been met. Student portfolios are the primary means of monitoring student progress.

This spring, HCCS will participate in the state's assessment program at the third and fourth grades and will be administering the Stanford or IOWA tests next fall.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?:
Insufficient Data. Standardized tests will be administered in the fall of 1997.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data.

Student Assessment Profile

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

School Description: The Lawrence Family Development Charter School is located in Lawrence and serves 240 students in grades K through 4. The mission of the Lawrence School is to use a parental involvement program and a two-way language program as a means to increase academic achievement. This school was founded by the Lawrence Family Development and Education Fund, Inc., community organizers and parents.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability

Lawrence Family Development Charter School uses standardized and performance-based assessments. The school administered the Brigance Diagnostic of Basic Skills (in both Spanish and English) this fall to grades 2-4 and will, from this spring forward, administer the Stanford-9. LFDCS will also participate in the state's assessment program at the 3rd and 4th grades. In addition, the school uses portfolio assessment to monitor student progress.

Lawrence Family Development Test Scores (Fall 1996)

Grade	Subject	LFDCS Brigance Diagnostic of Basic Skills		Lawrence Public Schools MAT-7 Spring 1996
		% of students at or above grade level	Grade Equivalent Levels	Stanines
2	Reading	48	1.78	
	Math	83	2.56	
3	Reading	37	1.88	5
	Math	62	2.77	5
4	Reading	56	3.4	
	Math	76	3.9	
4 Spanish	Reading	48	3.34	
	Math	60	3.6	

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?

Below Average to Average.

- The standardized test data indicates that 48 - 83% of LFDCS students were on grade level in grades 2 through 4;
- it also shows that, on average, students are below their appropriate grade equivalent level (with the exception of 2nd grade math).
- Comparisons with the Lawrence Public Schools are not possible since the charter school uses a different test from that used by the district.

In sum, the students that entered LFDCS performed at levels which were at or below national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?

Insufficient Data. LFDCS has administered the Brigance Diagnostic in the spring of 1996 and will be administering the Stanford-9 from this spring forward. This year's results are not yet available.

Student Assessment Profile
Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School

School Description: The Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School is located on the Middlesex Community College Campus in Lowell and serves 100 students in grades 9 through 12. This school offers a college preparatory program to students who have dropped-out of school. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, the school provides one-on-one counseling and extensive peer interaction. This school grew from an existing middle college program.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability
Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School (LMA), has geared its assessment system toward preparing its students for college. LMA's graduation requirements are clear and demanding. In order to graduate from LMA, a student needs to demonstrate her academic competency and have a plan for the future. In the fall, students take the Computerized College Placement Exam, CCPE, to assess their reading comprehension and mathematics skills (the same test that all college freshman take when entering one of the Commonwealth's state colleges or universities). In the spring, students are re-tested and need to pass this test in order to graduate. Students also take the PSAT and SAT's. In addition to standardized tests, students need to demonstrate their competency through their performance in the core subjects, such as: English, mathematics, social sciences, science, art, and health; and some less common disciplines, such as: conflict resolution and ethics. Finally, before a student receives a LMA diploma, she must develop a post-secondary plan.

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School CCPE Test Scores

Grade	Subject	Scores in Reading Comprehension and Math		
		Pre	Post	Difference
Seniors	Reading	72	77	5
	Math	57	62	5
All Students	Reading	56	67	11
	Math	36	50	14

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?

Below Average to Average.

- All of the LMACS students have dropped-out of school, school reports indicate that most of these students were performing at or below their peers in traditional educational settings.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?

Yes.

Gains on the Computerized College Placement Exams, on average, show gains of 12.5 points from fall to spring.

Student Assessment Profile
Marblehead Community Charter Public School

School Description: The Marblehead Community Charter Public School is located in Marblehead and serves 173 students in grades 5 through 8. This school utilizes a curriculum built around interdisciplinary projects inspired by the Coalition of Essential Schools -- student projects are connected through common school themes, with a special emphasis on community involvement. Parents and community members founded MCCPS.

Years of operation: 2

School-level Accountability
Marblehead Community Charter Public School (MCCPS) relies heavily on student exhibitions as a means of measuring student progress. Four times per year, students are challenged to present their work to the school community. The faculty have also developed a portfolio assessment system aligned with the MCCPS competencies.

In addition, MCCPS administers the Stanford-9 each spring and will participate in MCAS.

See Table on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average.

- Scores were above average as compared to national norms;
- but, about the same as those of the Marblehead Public School District.

In sum, those students that entered the Marblehead Community Charter Public School performed higher than national norms, but on par with the Marblehead Public School District.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Inconclusive Gains.

- Based on the Stanford-8 to Stanford-9 Normal Curve Equivalent conversion scores, MCCPS appears to have made inconsistent gains in grades 5 - 7;
- however, as the note on the next page indicates, since MCCPS moved from the Stanford-8 to the Stanford-9, scores should be viewed with caution and preferably not used for drawing conclusions about performance. Valid comparisons will be possible after the s[illegible]nd and subsequent administrations of the Stanford-9.

In sum, the MCCPS academic gains in its second year are inconclusive.

Marblehead Community Charter Public School Stanford-8 & 9 Test Scores

Grade	Subject	Entering Population Fall 1995 Stanford-8 *National Percentiles*		Charter School Gains 1995 - 1996 Stanford-8 & 9 *Normal Curve Equivalents*		
		Charter School	District Spring '96	Fall 1995 *Stan.9 Conv.* *	Fall 1996 *Stan.-9*	Diff. NCE
4	Reading		65-76			
	Language		64-74			
	Math		65-79			
5	Reading	81		66	62	(4)
	Language	68		59	57	(2)
	Math	67		53	57	4
6	Reading	67		60	66	6
	Language	74		65	61	4
	Math	71		70	63	(7)
7	Reading	75	82	58	61	3
	Language	76	74	69	59	(10)
	Math	74	82	66	59	(7)

Notes:

* These scores represent conversions of Stanford-8 scores to Stanford-9 scores.

- Harcourt Brace & Co., the publisher of the Stanford tests released a report that asserts that "apparent drops (or increases), [when changing from the Stanford 8 to Stanford 9]...are not necessarily real decreases (or increases) in student achievement. [This is called] the 'changing norms phenomenon.'" The report states further that, "schools should avoid comparing scores from different tests and norm sets to draw conclusions about changes in performance. Schools should rely on ...subsequent administrations of the new test to draw valid conclusions about trends or growth." (Stanford 9 Report: The Changing Norms Phenomenon. Harcourt Brace & Company, San Antonio, Texas, 1997.)

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Student Assessment Profile
Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School

School Description: The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is located in West Tisbury and serves 75 students ages 9 through 14. The school has mixed-aged groupings and emphasizes project-based learning. MVCS was founded by parents and community members from the island of Martha's Vineyard.

Years in operation: 1

School-level Accountability
Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School relies most heavily on portfolio assessment as a means of monitoring student performance. Students will also participate in MCAS at grades 8 and 10 as well as administer Terra Nova, a CTBS published assessment, each spring.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?:
Insufficient Data. Terra Nova testing will take place for the first time in the spring of 1997. Those results are not yet available.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data.

Student Assessment Profile
Neighborhood House Charter Public School

School Description: The Neighborhood House Charter School is located in Dorchester and serves 104 students in grades K through 5. The school, which began as an outgrowth of the Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, Inc., features small class sizes, individualized learning, and a focus on literacy, science/technology, and the creative arts.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability

Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS), has developed a set of standards, known as "Succeed Anywhere Standards," that it hopes will prepare its students to compete with students in the highest performing districts in the state. Students participate in the state assessment system and mirror the Boston Public Schools by taking the Stanford-9.

Students are also assessed individually before school begins in August and teachers spend upwards of an hour with each parent and child to develop an Individual Learning Plan that will guide the student's work throughout the year. These ILPs are based on the "Succeed Anywhere Standards" in mathematics, English, social studies and science. For example, in the principal's office their is a "Test-Yourself-Shelf" from which students can borrow an age-appropriate book to see whether she is reading at grade level.

See Test Results on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?

Average.

- 1st and 2nd grade students (with the exception of second grade reading) performed on par with students in the middle to lower third of schools in the Boston Public Schools.
- 3rd grade students, who have been in NHCS for a year or more, are performing on par with students in the upper third of BPS;
- 5th grade students, who have just arrived in the school this fall, are performing on par with those schools in the middle third of BPS.

In sum, it appears that the students that entered the Neighborhood House Charter School in grades 1, 2 and 5 were generally performing at or below the performance levels of students in the Boston Public Schools. There is some evidence to suggest that students in grade 3 entered NHCS performing at a reasonably high level since their scores in grade 2 were also strong relative to the Boston schools.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?

Insufficient Data.

- It is not possible to show gains relative to national norms because different tests were used from one year to the next and not enough data was available from the various grade levels.
- It is not possible to show gains relative to the distribution of district scores either. Boston Public Schools reported Stanford-9 scores for students in the third and fifth grades in the spring of 1996. NHCS did not have these grades at that time. Although Neighborhood House added these grades, and these students were subsequently tested in fall, 1996, there are not two complete sets of BPS and NHCS data against which to compare.

In sum, the gains for Neighborhood House Charter School are inconclusive due to a lack of comparable data. Successive Stanford-9 scores in the years to come will provide comparable data from which to measure academic gains.

Neighborhood House Charter School Test Scores

		Year One				Year Two		
Grade	Subject	NHCS Fall '95 MAT-7			BPS Spring '95 MAT-6	NHCS Fall '96 Stanford-9	BPS Spring '96 Stanford-9	
		%[18]	NP[19]	MAT-6[20] Conv.	Comparison[21]	%	%	Comparison
1	Reading	53.9	62	70	Middle Third			
	Math	20	36	48	Lower Third			
2	Reading	46.2	64	67	Upper Third	50	n/r	
	Math	33.3	56	67	Middle Third	23.6	n/r	
3	Reading					55	42	Upper Third
	Math					61.1	33	Upper Third
4*	Reading					61.1	n/r	
	Math					38.9	n/r	
5*	Reading					28.5	30	Middle Third
	Math					29.4	26	Middle/Upper Third

Notes:

* Grades 4 and 5 were added in the fall of 1996, and are therefore, a better entering student sample to compare to BPS. Grades 1-3 have been in the school for over a year.

[18] % = Percentage at or above proficiency.

[19] NP = National Percentile Rank.

[20] In order to compare the MAT-6 national percentile ranks from the Boston Public Schools to the Neighborhood House Charter School's MAT-7 scores, a conversion table supplied by the testing company was utilized.

[21] Comparison = This column indicates where the charter school compared to the over 70 schools in the Boston Public School System. Since MAT-7 is not comparable to the Stanford-9, comparisons were made to elementary schools in the Boston Public System to see if NHCS had many any relative gains. Future charter school gains will be measured on how well NHCS students perform on the Stanford-9 and MCAS, independent of district scores.

Student Assessment Profile

North Star Academy Charter School

School Description: The North Star Academy Charter School is located in Springfield and serves 72 high school students. The goal of North Star is to help inner-city youth take charge of their own education, earn a high school diploma, and develop a post-graduation plan. The school offers a high school program for skill development through an interdisciplinary, competency-based approach to learning. The Learning Tree, a community based organization that represents a collaborative of educators, parents and students working to promote educational opportunities for minority males in Springfield, founded this school.

Years in operation: 1

School-level Accountability:
The North Star Academy Charter School (NSACS) uses a range of approaches to measure student progress. NSACS utilizes portfolio assessment as a means of monitoring student mastery of academic skills. North Star Academy students will also participate in MCAS at the 10th grade and take the IOWA Test of Basic Skills each fall.

Notes: Data from the school is not yet available. Early analysis of entering students by the school administration suggested that scores on the IOWAs were low.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Insufficient Data. IOWA Tests have been and will be administered in the fall and spring of each year. No data was currently available.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. Test data on standardized and state tests not yet available.

Student Assessment Profile

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School

School Description: The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School is located in Hadley and serves 64 students in the ninth grade. The school is designed to provide students with an opportunity to access performing arts programs coupled with an excellent academic curriculum. This school was started by educators and artists active in the Hampshire Shakespeare Company.

Years in operation: 1

School-level Accountability: Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter High School primarily relies on portfolio assessment to measure the student performance. The school will administer the Stanford-9 in the fall and will participate in MCAS at the 10th grade level.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?

Insufficient Data. Stanford-9 results will not be available until the fall of 1997.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?

Insufficient Data. MCAS and Stanford-9 results are not yet available.

Student Assessment Profile
SABIS International Charter Public School

School Description: The SABIS International Charter School is located in Springfield and serves 600 students in grades K through 8. The mission of the school is to provide a rigorous, college-prep curriculum to the children of Springfield. This school was founded by local community leaders (the superintendent and former mayor) along with parents in the community and is managed by SABIS Education Systems, Inc..

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability

SABIS International Charter School (SICS), provides a structured, results-oriented, approach to assessment. SICS has a detailed and well-defined curriculum based on international standards. Upon entering, students are tested in math and English. Those students who test below grade level are advised to attend a free four-week summer school course to catch up -- last year 104 students, or close to 25% of the school, participated.

Throughout the year, students are assessed via the Academic Monitoring System Testing (AMS). On a weekly basis, students are tested on the essentials of each curriculum unit. The instructing teacher does not see or administer the test. SABIS emphasizes comprehension of math and English over all other subjects. If a student's scores indicate that she is falling behind in these subjects, tutoring will be provided. Tutoring is available at all grade levels throughout the day and after-school.

In addition to state assessments (MCAS), SABIS also administers the IOWA Test of Basic Skills in the fall and spring of each year.

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average.

- Students, on average, were performing below grade level in comparison to national norms in virtually every subject and grade in grades 2-6.
- This school was a "conversion school," the management changed, but all of the students either remained or were enrolled through the city of Springfield's controlled choice program.
- District grade equivalents generally reflect those of the charter school.
- Except for grade 7, where IOWA test scores of SABIS students exceed the district average, all other test scores from students in grades 2-6 were at or below the district average.

In sum, the students that entered the SABIS International Charter School performed at a level .

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Yes.

- Fall and Spring IOWA testing in the 1995/96 academic year, indicate that SABIS students improved their national percentile ranking in every subject and grade level;
- at the beginning of the year, on average, most students were performing below grade level and seven months later, students were on grade level in almost every subject area and every grade -- increasing approximately 1.5 grade equivalent levels per grade.

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SABIS International Charter School Iowa Test Scores

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Rankings			Grade Equivalent Levels			
2		September 1995	April 1996	Difference	September 1995	April 1996	Difference	*District Ave. Fall 1995*
	Reading	47	73	26	2.0	3.5	1.5	
	Language	39	65	26	1.8	3.2	1.4	
	Math	30	62	32	1.7	3.2	1.5	
3	Reading	21	44	23	2.1	3.6	1.5	*2.6*
	Language	13	48	35	1.9	3.7	1.8	*2.5*
	Math	19	39	20	2.3	3.5	1.2	*2.6*
4	Reading	36	52	16	3.5	5.0	1.5	*3.5*
	Language	35	63	28	3.5	5.6	2.1	*3.4*
	Math	28	67	39	3.4	5.6	2.2	*3.5*
5	Reading	37	43	6	4.5	5.4	.9	*4.5*
	Language	29	45	16	4.0	5.5	1.5	*4.4*
	Math	25	47	22	4.0	5.6	1.6	*4.5*
6	Reading	48	52	4	5.8	7.0	1.2	*5.2*
	Language	48	52	4	5.9	7.1	1.2	*5.2*
	Math	47	53	6	5.7	7.2	1.5	*5.4*
7	Reading	64	65	1	8.0	9.0	1.0	*6.0*
	Language	61	70	9	8.1	10.4	2.3	*5.7*
	Math	59	65	6	7.6	9.2	1.6	*6.0*

Note:
MEAP scores of fourth grade SABIS students in the spring of 1996 were below district and state averages. Since that was the last administration of the test, these data will not be helpful in establishing baseline data.

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Student Assessment Profile
Seven Hills Charter School

School Description: The Seven Hill Charter School is located in Worcester and serves 524 students in grades K through 7. The mission of the school is to prepare a diverse cross-section of the city's children for success with a high quality education at prevailing public school costs. The school was founded by local business, political and educational leaders and is managed by The Edison Project.

The mission of Renaissance is The school was founded by a partnership between a local foundation and community members and it is managed by The Edison Project, a private educational management company
Years in operation: 1

School-level Assessment:
Seven Hills Charter School (SHCS), utilizes a range of assessment tools to measure student performance. Each spring, students in grades 3 and 4 will participate in the state assessment system and students in grades 3 and 4 will take the MAT-7. Students in grades 5, 6 and 7 will take the Stanford-9 each fall and students in grades 2-5 take the Gates-McGinite.

In addition, based on Edison Project standards, SHCS administers an open-ended assessment developed in partnership with the Educational Testing Service. The Seven Hills faculty have also worked with the faculty of the twelve Edison schools nation-wide to develop a credible portfolio and performance-based assessment system (e.g. Edison project faculty from around the nation meet regularly to compare their assessments of student work in an effort to ensure scoring reliability.)

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Insufficient Data. Seven Hills will administer the MAT-7 this spring. These scores are not yet available.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data.

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Student Assessment Profile
Somerville Charter School

School Description: The Somerville Charter School is located in Somerville and serves 450 students in grades K through 8. This elementary school offers a rigorous, college-preparatory course of study. SCS was founded by a group of local parents and is managed by the SABIS Educational Systems Inc..

Years in operation: 1

School-level Accountability

Somerville Charter School (SCS), provides a structured, results-oriented, approach to assessment. SCS has a detailed and well-defined curriculum based on international standards. Upon entering, students are tested in math and English. Those students who test below grade level are advised to attend summer school courses.

Throughout the year, students are assessed via the Academic Monitoring System Testing (AMS). On a weekly basis, students are tested on the essentials of each curriculum unit -- the instructing teacher does not see or administer the test. SABIS emphasizes comprehension of math and English over all other subjects. If a student's scores indicate that she is falling behind in these subjects, tutoring will be provided. Tutoring is available at all grade levels throughout the day and after-school.

In addition to state assessments (MCAS), SCS also administers the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills in the fall and spring of each year in grades 1-8.

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Below Average to Average.

- The students enrolled in the Somerville Charter School are, on average, on grade level.
- The students in the Somerville Public Schools appear to be at or above grade level.
- Percentile rankings of charter school students in grades 3, 4 and 7 were below those of the Somerville School district; while percentile rankings of students in grades 5, 6 and 8 were on par or exceeded those of the district.

In sum, the students that entered the Somerville Charter School this year performed at a level at or below that of the district from which most of them came.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. Spring 1997 CAT-5 results are not yet available.

Somerville Charter School Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills Scores (Fall 1996)

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Ranking		Grade Equivalent Levels	
		SCS Fall 1996	District Spring 1996	SCS Fall 1996	District Spring 1996
3	Reading	52	54	3.2	4.1
	Language	41	54	2.9	4.2
	Math	44	53	2.9	4.0
4	Reading	44	52	3.7	5.0
	Language	41	59	3.2	5.4
	Math	40	56	3.7	5.0
5	Reading	66	53	5.8	6.0
	Language	69	66	6.3	7.1
	Math	68	61	5.8	6.4
6	Reading	57	52	6.7	7.2
	Language	59	60	7.1	8.1
	Math	57	57	6.3	7.4
7	Reading	56	59	7.5	8.8
	Language	56	67	7.5	10.7
	Math	50	66	6.9	8.8
8*	Reading	71	56	9.9	9.1
	Language	59	63	9.7	10.8
	Math	68	64	9.1	9.4

Notes:

* Eighth grade students in the Somerville School District were tested in December 1996 while students in grades 3-7 were tested in May 1996.

- The time of year that a test was taken should be considered when comparing grade equivalents (GE), e.g. an average third grade student taking this test in September, the first should have a GE of 3.1 or higher.
- 312 (or 70%) of the 450 students at the Somerville Charter School are Somerville residents.

Student Assessment Profile
South Shore Charter School

School Description: The South Shore Charter School is located in Hull and serves 340 students in grades K through 12. The elementary curriculum is based on E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence and the high school curriculum is project-based. The learning is individually paced, with students at the high school level having the option of taking college-level courses. This school was founded by a coalition of local parents, business people and educators led by Timothy Anderson.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability:
South Shore Charter School utilizes an array of standardized and performance-based measures of student performance. The required curriculum is broken down into modules and monitored through "EduCore," an on-line report card. This system is updated weekly, so in the future, students and parents can monitor student progress from their home or office. Regular EduCore assessments are combined with faculty observations, performance-based assessments (portfolios and student exhibitions), and standardized tests in an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of each individual's progress.

South Shore students will participate in all state assessments at the 3rd, 4th, 8th and 10th grade levels as well as administer the California Achievement Test-5 to students in grades K-12 each fall and spring.

See Test Scores on next page.

Analysis:
What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average.

- CAT-5 test scores from fall 1996 indicate that the majority of SSCS students are at or slightly above national norms in terms of grade equivalent levels.
- Twenty percent of SSCS students are special needs students and these students scored significantly lower than the regular education students.
- Hull Public Schools do not administer a standardized assessment so comparisons to the district are not possible.

In sum, the students that entered the South Shore Charter School performed at an average level of performance in relation to national norms.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. Only one set of CAT-5 results is available. This year's CAT-5 results are not yet available.

South Shore Charter School CAT-5 Test Scores (Fall 1996)

Grade	Subject	National Percentile Ranking	Grade Equivalent Levels Regular Ed. (Sp.Ed.)
2	Reading	35.7	1.8
	Language	45	2.0
	Math	77	2.4
3	Reading	86.0	5.3
	Language	82.7	5.4
	Math	92.5	4.6
4	Reading	69	5.1
	Language	73.5	5.8
	Math	73	4.6
5	Reading	60	5.2
	Language	56	5.9
	Math	53.5	5.0
6	Reading	64	8.1 (4.8)
	Language	58	6.3 (4.3)
	Math	77	7.0 (4.6)
7	Reading	77	9.5 (5.8)
	Language	73	7.9 (4.7)
	Math	67	7.4 (4.8)
8	Reading	74	10.7 (5.6)
	Language	58	9.9 (4.9)
	Math	56	7.9 (5.6)
9	Reading	68	10.2 (5.4)
	Language	57	8.2 (2.7)
	Math	42	9.4 (6.4)
10	Reading	58	10.9
	Language	54	10.9
	Math	36	8.9
11	Reading	*	12.9 (10.0)
	Language	*	12.9 (6.3)
	Math	*	12.9 (5.5)
12	Reading	*	12.6
	Language	*	12.9
	Math	*	12.9

Notes:

* Value not reported for fewer than 10 students. The N for regular education students ranged from 7 - 24 per grade level and the N for special education students ranged from 3 - 7 per grade level (fewer than 3 students was not reported).

Student Assessment Profile
YouthBuild Boston Charter School

School Description: The YouthBuild Boston Charter School is located in Roxbury and serves 30 high school-aged students. The mission of YouthBuild is to provide disenfranchised young people with the academic, vocational, and leadership skills needed to rebuild their lives. The program is designed for high school drop-outs and provides these young people with construction skills and a high school education. This school grew out of the pre-existing YouthBuild Boston youth development program.

Years in operation: 2

School-level Accountability:
YouthBuild Boston Charter School (YBCS) relies primarily on its competency-based curriculum to measure student progress. YBCS has developed a set of 27 competencies that students must master in order to graduate. Prior to graduation, a student's portfolio is evaluated by the faculty for its adequacy in addressing the school's competencies.

YouthBuild students also participate in standardized tests. Last year they took the Test of Applied Literacy Skills at the beginning and end of their educational experience. This test measures levels of adult proficiency in reading, writing, and math. YouthBuild Charter School students are also required to participate in MCAS.

Average TALS Scores upon entry, fall 1995:

Literacy =	280
Math =	270

Analysis:

What is the academic performance level of students entering this charter school?
Average to Below Average.

- All of the YouthBuild Boston students have dropped-out of school, school records would indicate that most of these students were performing at or below their peers in the Boston Public Schools.

Have the students in this charter school made academic gains?
Insufficient Data. Test data on standardized and state tests not available.

Massachusetts Department of Education

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education
Dr. Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner of Education

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